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# Letter from Mrs. Gilday on COVID Resources

 [nps.edu/-/letter-from-mrs.-gilday-on-covid-resources](https://nps.edu/-/letter-from-mrs.-gilday-on-covid-resources)

Mrs. Linda Gilday | January 22, 2021



Mrs. Gilday, wife of Chief of Naval Operations Mike Gilday, addresses the Navy family on the struggles and challenges associated with the COVID-19 environment, and offers strategies to adapt and provides a list of resources for help and support.

Dear Navy Family Members and Spouses,

Over the last month, I have had the incredible privilege to talk to spouses and witness work that our women and men in uniform do every day across the Fleet. In speaking with several different groups in the Pacific Northwest, Monterey, Naples, Bahrain and Rota, I know that the Navy is an anchoring part of your life. But in some cases, it may only be a small piece. Each day, family, community, parental and spousal obligations compete for your attention and prioritization. And to those of you who have shared so openly with me, I want to thank you for opening a window into your daily lives.

What's been weighing on me recently is the degree to which many are struggling to adapt to a new way of life since COVID came along, particularly those who have deployed family members. All across the world everyone has had to adapt, and radically change their "old" way of life. But for those of us in the Navy – active, reserve, civilians and family members –

it's only added more stress on top of frequent moves, child care gaps and deployments. Whether you or a member of your family has COVID, or whether you are doing everything possible not to get it, we all have had to deal with a change of routine, and fear of one form or another.

If you don't have time to read this whole letter, I do hope you:

- a. Don't keep things bottled up.
- b. Know you're not alone.
- c. Will reach out to others (including those in our Navy family) who can listen, and perhaps provide tangible help in the areas you most desperately need.

I am in no way a mental health expert, but can empathize with the range of emotions many are going through right now: anger, isolation, fear, exhaustion, uncertainty, and even at times feeling like a victim. While I have been through my fair share of experiences and emotions, I want you to know that I care, and your Navy leadership does too.

To help you, I've compiled a list of things I do to help get me through. I hope these will be helpful for you as well.

- a. Know that this is a blip in the moment of history. Days are long, but the months and years will fly by. Try to keep a positive outlook. Tomorrow will be here before you know it; it's a fresh start.
- b. Get some rest and relaxation. (Easier said than done for those with infants and small children, or if you have a deployed spouse, I know).
- c. Keep, hold on to, and even grow your connections. Have someone that you can call when it all goes "wrong" (or right). Having a good friend on the other end of the line is a safety net built of gold. And, it is never too late to make a new friend, even if you think you "can't call them" because of rank or because "their life is perfect," (It's not!) Don't be afraid to be vulnerable.
- d. Don't be afraid of medical help, should you need it. The medical assistance professionals will help you assess anxiety and depression, or any medical issue.
- e. Eat "well" (at least one chocolate a day, no kidding), and dare I say, exercise.
- f. Limit your TV time.
- g. Understand that if your family or coworkers are driving you crazy, they are being driven crazy by something of their own. We are all dealing with something to some degree.

- h. Grow your faith. Churches are all online these days, which makes it easy to try them out to see where you fit. Your chaplain can help you find a faith family.
- i. Laugh. Seek out funny things each day, there are plenty online! There are so many, and so many platforms other than email and texting, that you don't even need an account to access. Find one and search for "funny" + words that speak to your situation.
- j. Keep growing and learning. Find one tiny thing you have enjoyed as you grew up, and spend some time each day learning more about it. For me, it is plants and photography.
- k. Have a checklist – or bigger, a plan. Check things off each day when actions are completed. It will give you a feeling of accomplishment. If you love lists, make another one: things you can do, not the things you can't. You'll be surprised.

Use these tips to help, and don't forget to step outside to get some fresh air every once in a while!

There are also a variety of support groups we have in the military that I encourage you to take advantage of if you need it. This is not an all-encompassing list, and in no particular order:

a. Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647, [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil). Also, go right to: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/family-life/keeping-your-family-strong/ways-to-practice-resilience-skills-during-challenging-times/>

b. Chaplain Corps Hotline: 1-757-322-5650 CEAP Civilian Employee Assistance Program 1-844-366-2327. <https://donceap.foh.psc.gov/>

c. Counseling:

i. Fleet and Family Support Center Counseling 1-800-372-5463 (8-4:30 EST).

ii. Fleet and Family Support Center Professional Counseling 1-866-293-2776. [NASCC-FFSC@navy.mil](mailto:NASCC-FFSC@navy.mil)

iii. For Tricare beneficiaries: telehealth services are offered, and you'd be surprised how easy it

is: [https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/04\\_23\\_2020\\_TRICARE\\_offers\\_telehealth\\_services\\_for\\_mental\\_health\\_care](https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/04_23_2020_TRICARE_offers_telehealth_services_for_mental_health_care)

d. Find some podcasts! If strapping on the headphones is something you can work in, there are some good ones out there such as those offered by Kitsap: <https://www.navylifepnw.com/po>

e. For Crisis situations, Military Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 Press 1, texting 838255, or visit: [www.veteranscrisisline.net/activeduty.asp](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/activeduty.asp)

f. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.

g. Project 1 Small Act: <https://navstress.wordpress.com/> and <https://blog-brigade.militaryonesource.mil/>

h. Vets4Warriors at 1-855-838-8255 or visiting [www.vets4warriors.com](http://www.vets4warriors.com).

i. Navy Reserve Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP).  
[www.navyreserve.navy.mil/Pages/PHOP.aspx](http://www.navyreserve.navy.mil/Pages/PHOP.aspx).

j. Documents on activities, sleep, fitness, rebounding, etc. can be found at: <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

k. Check it out: the Navy and MC Public Health Center has a ton of wellness links on breathing, muscle relaxation, imagery, meditation, mindfulness, music (by type), combination strategies, & sleep at: <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/psychological-emotional-wellbeing/relax-relax/pages/index.html>

l. For anyone seeking any type of information on the Navy using your phone, put on a pot of coffee and get ready. There's an "app locker?" It's a site that has all the apps you may want to download. <https://www.applocker.navy.mil/#!/apps>

m. Keep some short sayings handy (taped to your bathroom mirror?) For ones on hope, see: <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/psychological-emotional-wellbeing/hope.pdf>.

n. Your ombudsman: [https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program/work-and-family-life/ombudsman\\_program.html](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/work-and-family-life/ombudsman_program.html)

Last but not least, here are some COVID-19 Resource pages as well:

a. DOD Coronavirus Spotlight

Page: <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>

b. DOD Vaccine Availability, Distribution and Population Schema:

c. <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Vaccine-Availability/>

d. DHA COVID Main Page: <https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Combat-Support/Public-Health/Coronavirus>

e. DHA COVID Vaccine Toolkit: <https://www.health.mil/About-MHS/MHS-Toolkits/COVID-19-Vaccine-Toolkit>

f. Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center COVID Main

Page: <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/Pages/Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

g. BUMED COVID Main Page (Provider

Focused): <https://www.med.navy.mil/pages/COVID19.aspx>

h. CDC Vaccine Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

i. CDC COVID Vaccine FAQ: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

j. CDC Talking to Recipients about COVID-19

Vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/index.html>

k. CDC COVID FAQ: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

Each and every day, you give me an appreciation for the challenges that we all face, the support you provide without recognition most times, and of the inner workings of our families. While the Navy is likely only one small part of the many facets of your personal life, now is the time to lean on your big Navy family. We will get through this together and come out stronger on the other side. Now is the time to lean on each other to figure out ways to stay strong, be resilient and even grow during this challenging time.

Stay strong Navy spouses and families!

Sincerely,

Linda Gilday

<https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Blogs/Detail/Article/2479073/letter-from-mrs-gilday-on-covid-resources/>